







250



















THE KASÎDAH  
OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ  
EL-YEZDÎ

BY SIR RICHARD F. BURTON

WOOD-ENGRAVINGS *by* WILFRED JONES



*Published by* ALFRED A. KNOPF *New York*



Copyright, 1924, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.  
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## WOOD ENGRAVINGS

### I FRONTISPIECE

*When swift the Camel-rider spans the howling waste, by Kismet sped,  
And of his Magic Wand a wave hurries the quick to join the dead.*

### II FACING PAGE 16

*"Eat, drink, and sport; the rest of life's not worth a fillip," quoth the King;  
Methinks the saying saith too much: the swine would say the selfsame thing!*

### III FACING PAGE 24

*How coming to the Feast unbid, he found the gorgeous table spread  
With the fair-seeming Sodom-fruit, with stones that bear the shape of bread:*

### IV FACING PAGE 32

*"You changeful finite Creatures strain" (rejoins the Drawer of the Wine)  
"The dizzy depths of Infinite Power to fathom with your foot of twine;"*

### V FACING PAGE 40

*"You bring down Heav'en to vulgar Earth; your Maker like yourselves you make,  
"You quake to own a reign of Law, you pray the Law its laws to break;*

### VI FACING PAGE 48

*"And when, at length, 'Great Pan is dead' uprose the loud and dol'orous cry  
"A glamour wither'd on the ground, a splendour faded in the sky.*

### VII FACING PAGE 56

*Where then "Th' Eternal nature-law by God engraved on human heart?"  
Behold his simiad sponce and own the Thing could play no higher part.*

### VIII FACING PAGE 64

*Life is a ladder infinite-stepped, that hides its rungs from human eyes;  
Planted its foot in chaos-gloom, its head soars high above the skies:*

### IX FACING PAGE 72

*"Who drinks one bowl hath scant delight; to poorest passion he was born;  
"Who drains the score must e'er expect to rue the headache of the morn."*

X FACING PAGE 80

*"You all are right, you all are wrong," we hear the careless Soofi say,  
"For each believes his glimm'ring lamp to be the gorgeous light of day."*

XI FACING PAGE 88

*Finds mirth and joy in Jamshid-bowl; toys with the Daughter of the vine;  
And bids the beauteous cup-boy say, "Master I bring thee ruby wine!"*

XII FACING PAGE 96

*But!—faded flow'er and fallen leaf no more shall deck the parent tree;  
And man once dropt by Tree of Life what hope of other life has he?*





# THE KASĪDAH



Let his page  
Which charms the chosen spirits of the age,  
Fold itself for a serener clime  
Of years to come, and find its recompense  
In that just expectation.

SHELLEY

Let them laugh at me for speaking of things which they do not  
understand; and I must pity them while they laugh at me.

ST. AUGUSTINE



## TO THE READER

*The Translator has ventured to entitle a "Lay of the Higher Law" the following Composition, which aims at being in advance of its time; and he has not feared the danger of collision with such unpleasant forms as the "Higher Culture." The principles which justify the name are as follows:—*

*The Author asserts that Happiness and Misery are equally divided and distributed in the world.*

*He makes Self-cultivation, with due regard to others, the sole and sufficient object of human life.*

*He suggests that the affections, the sympathies and the "divine gift of Pity" are man's highest enjoyments.*

*He advocates suspension of judgment, with a proper suspicion of "Facts, the idlest of superstitions."*

*Finally, although destructive to appearance, he is essentially reconstructive.*

*For other details concerning the Poem and the Poet, the curious reader is referred to the end of the volume.*

F. B.

VIENNA • NOV. 1880





---

# THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---



## FIRST PART

### I

The hour is nigh; the waning Queen walks forth to  
rule the later night;  
Crown'd with the sparkle of a Star, and throned on  
orb of ashen light:

### II

The Wolf-tail<sup>1</sup> sweeps the paling East to leave a deeper  
gloom behind,  
And Dawn uprears her shining head, sighing with sem-  
blance of a wind:

### III

The highlands catch yon Orient gleam, while pur-  
pling still the lowlands lie;  
And pearly mists, the morning-pride, soar incense-like  
to greet the sky.

<sup>1</sup> The false dawn.



IV

The horses neigh, the camels groan, the torches gleam,  
the cressets flare;  
The town of canvas falls, and man with din and dint  
invadeth air:

V

The Golden Gates swing right and left; up springs the  
Sun with flamy brow;  
The dew-cloud melts in gush of light; brown Earth  
is bathed in morning-glow.

VI

Slowly they wind athwart the wild, and while young  
Day his anthem swells,  
Sad falls upon my yearning ear the tinkling of the  
Camel-bells:

VII

O'er fiery waste and frozen wold, o'er horrid hill and  
gloomy glen,  
The home of grisly beast and Ghoul,<sup>1</sup> the haunts of  
wilder, grislier men;—

<sup>1</sup> The Demon of the Desert.



VIII

With the brief gladness of the Palms, that tower and  
    sway o'er seething plain,  
Fraught with the thoughts of rustling shade, and well-  
    ing spring, and rushing rain;

IX

With the short solace of the ridge, by gentle zephyrs  
    played upon,  
Whose breezy head and bosky side front seas of coolly  
    celadon;—

X

'Tis theirs to pass with joy and hope, whose souls shall  
    ever thrill and fill  
Dreams of the Birthplace and the Tomb,—visions of  
    Allah's Holy Hill.<sup>1</sup>

XI

But we? Another shift of scene, another pang to rack  
    the heart;  
Why meet we on the bridge of Time to 'change one  
    greeting and to part?

<sup>1</sup> Arafât, near Mecca.



---

THE KASĪDAH OF HÂJĪ ABDŪ EL-YEZDĪ

---

XII

We meet to part; yet asks my sprite, Part we to meet?  
Ah! is it so?  
Man's fancy-made Omniscience knows, who made  
Omniscience nought can know.

XIII

Why must we meet, why must we part, why must we  
bear this yoke of MUST,  
Without our leave or askt or given, by tyrant Fate on  
victim thrust?

XIV

That Eve so gay, so bright, so glad, this Morn so dim,  
and sad, and grey;  
Strange that life's Registrar should write this day a  
day, that day a day!

XV

Mine eyes, my brain, my heart, are sad,—sad is the very  
core of me;  
All wearies, changes, passes, ends; alas! the Birthday's  
injury!



XVI

Friends of my youth, a last adieu! haply some day we  
meet again;  
Yet ne'er the selfsame men shall meet; the years shall  
make us other men:

XVII

The light of morn has grown to noon, has paled with  
eve, and now farewell!  
Go, vanish from my Life as dies the tinkling of the  
Camel's bell.





---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---



S E C O N D   P A R T

I

In these drear wastes of sea-born land, these wilds  
where none may dwell but He,  
What visionary Pasts revive, what process of the Years  
we see:

II

Gazing beyond the thin blue line that rims the far  
horizon-ring,  
Our sadden'd sight why haunt these ghosts, whence  
do these spectral shadows spring?

III

What endless questions vex the thought, of Whence  
and Whither, When and How?  
What fond and foolish strife to read the Scripture writ  
on human brow;







IV

As stand we perchd on point of Time, betwixt the two  
Eternities,  
Whose awful secrets gathering round with black pro-  
found oppress our eyes.

V

“This gloomy night, these grisly waves, these winds  
and whirlpools loud and dread:  
What reck they of our wretched plight who Safety’s  
shore so lightly tread?”

VI

Thus quoth the Bard of Love and Wine,<sup>1</sup> whose dream  
of Heaven ne’er could rise  
Beyond the brimming Kausar-cup and Houris with  
the white-black eyes;

VII

Ah me! my race of threescore years is short, but long  
enough to pall  
My sense with joyless joys as these, with Love and  
Houris, Wine and all.

<sup>1</sup> Hâfiz of Shirâz.



---

THE KASĪDAH OF HÂJĪ ABDŪ EL-YEZDĪ

---

VIII

Another boasts he would divorce old barren Reason  
from his bed,  
And wed the Vine-maid in her stead;—fools who be-  
lieve a word he said! <sup>1</sup>

IX

And "'Dust thou art to dust returning,' ne'er was spoke  
of human soul,"  
The Soofi cries, 'tis well for him that hath such gift to  
ask its goal.

X

"And this is all, for this we're born to weep a little  
and to die!"  
So sings the shallow bard whose life still labours at  
the letter "I."

XI

"Ear never heard, Eye never saw the bliss of those who  
enter in  
My heavenly kingdom," Isâ said, who wailed our sor-  
rows and our sin:

<sup>1</sup> Omar-i-Khayyâm, the tent-maker poet of Persia.





---

## THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

### XII

Too much of words or yet too few! What to thy God-  
head easier than  
One little glimpse of Paradise to ope the eyes and ears  
of man?

### XIII

"I am the Truth! I am the Truth!" we hear the God-  
drunk gnostic cry.  
"The microcosm abides in ME; Eternal Allah's nought  
but I!"

### XIV

Mansûr<sup>1</sup> was wise, but wiser they who smote him with  
the hurlèd stones;  
And, though his blood a witness bore, no wisdom-  
might could mend his bones.

### XV

"Eat, drink, and sport; the rest of life's not worth a  
fillip," quoth the King;  
Methinks the saying saith too much: the swine would  
say the selfsame thing!

<sup>1</sup> A famous Mystic stoned for blasphemy.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XVI

Two-footed beasts that browse through life, by Death  
to serve as soil design'd,  
Bow prone to Earth whereof they be, and there the  
proper pleasures find:

XVII

But you of finer, nobler stuff, ye, whom to Higher  
leads the High,  
What binds your hearts in common bond with crea-  
tures of the stall and sty?

XVIII

"In certain hope of Life-to-come I journey through  
this shifting scene,"  
The Zâhid<sup>1</sup> snarls and saunters down his Vale of Tears  
with confi'dent mien.

XIX

Wiser than Amrân's Son<sup>2</sup> art thou, who ken'st so well  
the world-to-be,  
The Future when the Past is not, the Present merest  
dreamery;

<sup>1</sup>The "Philister" of "respectable" belief.      <sup>2</sup>Moses in the Koran.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XX

What know'st thou, man, of Life? and yet, for ever  
twixt the womb, the grave,  
Thou pratest of the Coming Life, of Heav'n and Hell  
thou fain must rave.

XXI

The world is old and thou art young; the world is large  
and thou art small;  
Cease, atom of a moment's span, to hold thyself an  
All-in-All!



---

# THE KASĪDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---



## T H I R D   P A R T

### I

Fie, fie! you visionary things, ye motes that dance in  
sunny glow,  
Who base and build Eternities on briefest moment  
here below;

### II

Who pass through Life like caged birds, the captives  
of a despot will;  
Still wond'ring How and When and Why, and Whence  
and Whither, wond'ring still;

### III

Still wond'ring how the Marvel came because two  
coupling mammals chose  
To slake the thirst of fleshly love, and thus the "Im-  
mortal Being" rose;









IV

Wond'ring the Babe with staring eyes, perforce com-  
pel'd from night to day,  
Gript in the giant grasp of Life like gale-borne dust  
or wind-wrung spray;

V

Who comes imbecile to the world 'mid double dan-  
ger, groans, and tears;  
The toy, the sport, the waif and stray of passions, error,  
wrath and fears;

VI

Who knows not Whence he came nor Why, who  
kens not Whither bound and When,  
Yet such is Allah's choicest gift, the blessing dreamt  
by foolish men;

VII

Who step by step perforce returns to couthless youth,  
wan, white and cold,  
Lisping again his broken words till 'all the tale be  
fully told:



VIII

Wond'ring the Babe with quenchèd orbs, an oldster  
bow'd by burthening years,  
How 'scaped the skiff an hundred storms; how 'scaped  
the thread a thousand shears;

IX

How coming to the Feast unbid, he found the gorgeous  
table spread  
With the fair-seeming Sodom-fruit, with stones that  
bear the shape of bread:

X

How Life was nought but ray of sun that clove the  
darkness thick and blind,  
The ravings of the reckless storm, the shrieking of  
the rav'ening wind;

XI

How lovely visions 'guiled his sleep, aye fading with  
the break of morn,  
Till every sweet became a sour, till every rose became  
a thorn;



---

THE KASĪDAH OF HĀJĪ ABDŪ EL-YEZDĪ

---

XII

Till dust and ashes met his eyes wherever turned their  
saddened gaze;  
The wrecks of joys and hopes and loves, the rubbish  
of his wasted days;

XIII

How every high heroic Thought that longed to breathe  
empyrean air,  
Failed of its feathers, fell to earth, and perisht of a  
sheer despair;

XIV

How, dower'd with heritage of brain, whose might  
has split the solar ray,  
His rest is grossest coarsest earth, a crown of gold on  
brow of clay;

XV

This House whose frame be flesh and bone, mortar'd  
with blood and faced with skin,  
The home of sickness, dolours, age; unclean without,  
impure within:



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XVI

Sans ray to cheer its inner gloom, the chambers  
haunted by the Ghost,  
Darkness his name, a cold dumb Shade stronger than  
all the heav'nly host.

XVII

This tube, an enigmatic pipe, whose end was laid be-  
fore begun,  
That lengthens, broadens, shrinks and breaks; puzzle,  
machine, automaton;

XVIII

The first of Pots the Potter made by Chrysorrhoas'  
blue-green wave;<sup>1</sup>  
Methinks I see him smile to see what guerdon to the  
world he gave!

XIX

How Life is dim, unreal, vain, like scenes that round  
the drunkard reel;  
How "Being" meaneth not to be; to see and hear,  
smell, taste and feel.

<sup>1</sup>The Abana, River of Damascus.



XX

A drop in Ocean's boundless tide, unfathom'd waste  
of agony;  
Where millions live their horrid lives by making other  
millions die.

XXI

How with a heart that would through love, to Uni-  
versal Love aspire,  
Man woos infernal chance to smite, as Min'arets draw  
the Thunder-fire.

XXII

How Earth on Earth builds tow'er and wall, to crumble  
at a touch of Time;  
How Earth on Earth from Shînar-plain the heights  
of Heaven fain would climb.

XXIII

How short this Life, how long withal; how false its  
weal, how true its woes,  
This fever-fit with paroxysms to mark its opening  
and its close.



XXIV

Ah! gay the day with shine of sun, and bright the  
breeze, and blithe the throng  
Met on the River-bank to play, when I was young,  
when I was young:

XXV

Such general joy could never fade; and yet the chilling  
whisper came  
One face had paled, one form had failed; had fled the  
bank, had swum the stream;

XXVI

Still revellers danced, and sang, and trod the hither  
bank of Time's deep tide,  
Still one by one they left and fared to the far misty  
thither side;

XXVII

And now the last hath slipt away yon drear Death-  
desert to explore,  
And now one Pilgrim worn and lorn still lingers on  
the lonely shore.









---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XXVIII

Yes, Life in youth-tide standeth still; in Manhood  
streameth soft and slow;  
See, as it nears the abysmal goal how fleet the waters  
flash and flow!

XXIX

And Deaths are twain; the Deaths we see drop like  
the leaves in windy Fall;  
But ours, our own, are ruined worlds, a globe collapst,  
last end of all.

XXX

We live our lives with rogues and fools, dead and alive,  
alive and dead,  
We die 'twixt one who feels the pulse and one who  
frets and clouds the head:

XXXI

And,—oh, the Pity!—hardly conned the lesson comes  
its fatal term;  
Fate bids us bundle up our books, and bear them  
bod'ily to the worm:



XXXII

Hardly we learn to wield the blade before the wrist  
grows stiff and old;  
Hardly we learn to ply the pen ere Thought and Fancy  
faint with cold:

XXXIII

Hardly we find the path of love, to sink the Self, for-  
get the "I,"  
When sad suspicion grips the heart, when Man, *the*  
Man, begins to die:

XXXIV

Hardly we scale the wisdom-heights, and sight the  
Pisgah-scene around,  
And breathe the breath of heav'only air, and hear the  
Spheres' harmonious sound;

XXXV

When swift the Camel-rider spans the howling waste,  
by Kismet sped,  
And of his Magic Wand a wave hurries the quick to  
join the dead.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Death in Arabia rides a Camel, not a pale horse.



XXXVI

How sore the burden, strange the strife; how full of  
splendour, wonder, fear;  
Life, atom of that Infinite Space that stretcheth 'twixt  
the Here and There.

XXXVII

How Thought is impotent to divine the secret which  
the gods defend,  
The Why of birth and life and death, that Isis-veil no  
hand may rend.

XXXVIII

Eternal Morrows make our Day; our *Is* is aye *to be* till  
when  
Night closes in; 'tis all a dream, and yet we die,—  
and then and THEN?

XXXIX

And still the Weaver plies his loom, whose warp and  
woof is wretched Man  
Weaving th' unpattern'd dark design, so dark we doubt  
it owns a plan.



XL

Dost not, O Maker, blush to hear, amid the storm of  
tears and blood,  
Man say Thy mercy made what is, and saw the made  
and said 'twas good?

XLI

The marvel is that man can smile dreaming his ghostly  
ghostly dream;—  
Better the heedless atomy that buzzes in the morning  
beam!

XLII

O the dread pathos of our lives! how durst thou, Allah,  
thus to play  
With Love, Affection, Friendship, all that shows the  
god in mortal clay?

XLIII

But ah! what 'vaileth man to mourn; shall tears bring  
forth what smiles ne'er brought;  
Shall brooding breed a thought of joy? Ah hush the  
sigh, forget the thought!



XLIV

Silence thine immemorial quest, contain thy nature's  
vain complaint;  
None heeds, none cares for thee or thine;—like thee  
how many came and went?

XLV

Cease, Man, to mourn, to weep, to wail; enjoy thy  
shining hour of sun;  
We dance along Death's icy brink, but is the dance  
less full of fun?





---

# THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---



## FOURTH PART

### I

What Truths hath gleaned that Sage consumed by  
many a moon that waxt and waned?  
What Prophet-strain be his to sing? What hath his  
old Experience gained?

### II

There is no God, no man-made God; a bigger, stronger,  
crueller man;  
Black phantom of our baby-fears, ere Thought, the  
life of Life, began.

### III

Right quoth the Hindu Prince of old,<sup>1</sup> "An Ishwara  
for one I nill,  
Th' almighty everlasting Good who cannot 'bate  
th' Eternal Ill":

<sup>1</sup> Buddha.







IV

"Your gods may be, what shows they are?" hear  
China's Perfect Sage declare;<sup>1</sup>  
"And being, what to us be they who dwell so darkly  
and so far?"

V

"All matter hath a birth and death; 'tis made, unmade  
and made anew;  
"We choose to call the Maker 'God':—such is the  
Zâhid's owly view.

VI

"You changeful finite Creatures strain" (rejoins the  
Drawer of the Wine)<sup>2</sup>  
"The dizzy depths of Inf'inite Power to fathom with  
your foot of twine";

VII

"Poor idols of man's heart and head with the Divine  
Idea to blend;  
"To preach as 'Nature's Common Course' what any  
hour may shift or end."

<sup>1</sup>Confucius.      <sup>2</sup>The Soofi or Gnostic opposed to the Zâhid.



VIII

"How shall the Shown pretend to ken aught of the  
Showman or the Show?

"Why meanly bargain to believe, which only means  
thou ne'er canst know?

IX

"How may the passing Now contain the standing  
Now—Eternity?—

"An endless *is* without a *was*, the *be* and never the  
*to-be*?

X

"Who made your Maker? If Self-made, why fare so  
far to fare the worse?

"Sufficeth not a world of worlds, a self-made chain  
of universe?

XI

"Grant an Idea, Primal Cause, the Causing Cause,  
why crave for more?

"Why strive its depth and breadth to mete, to trace  
its work, its aid to implore?



XII

"Unknown, Incomprehensible, whate'er you choose  
to call it, call;  
"But leave it vague as airy space, dark in its darkness  
mystical.

XIII

"Your childish fears would seek a Sire, by the non-  
human God defin'd,  
"What your five wits may wot ye weet; what *is* you  
please to dub 'design'd';

XIV

"You bring down Heav'en to vulgar Earth; your Maker  
like yourselves you make,  
"You quake to own a reign of Law, you pray the Law  
its laws to break;

XV

"You pray, but hath your thought e'er weighed how  
empty vain the prayer must be,  
"That begs a boon already giv'en, or craves a change  
of Law to see?



XVI

"Say, Man, deep learnèd in the Scheme that orders  
    mysteries sublime,  
"How came it this was Jesus, that was Judas from the  
    birth of Time?

XVII

"How I the tiger, thou the lamb; again the Secret,  
    prithee, show  
"Who slew the slain, bowman or bolt or Fate that  
    drave the man, the bow?

XVIII

"Man worships self: his God is Man; the struggling  
    of the mortal mind  
"To form its model as 'twould be, the perfect of itself  
    to find.

XIX

"The God became sage, priest and scribe where Nilus'  
    serpent made the vale;  
"A gloomy Brahm in glowing Ind, a neutral some-  
    thing cold and pale:





XX

"Amid the high Chaldean hills a moulder of the  
heavenly spheres;  
"On Guebre steppes the Timeless-God who governs  
by his dual peers:

XXI

"In Hebrew tents the Lord that led His leprous slaves  
to fight and jar;  
"Yahveh,<sup>1</sup> Adon or Elohîm, the God that smites, the  
Man of War.

XXII

"The lovely Gods of lib'ertine Greece, those fair and  
frail humanities  
"Whose homes o'erlook'd the Middle Sea, where all  
Earth's beauty cradled lies,

XXIII

"Ne'er left its blessèd bounds, nor sought the barb'a-  
rous climes of barb'arous gods  
"Where Odin of the dreary North o'er hog and sickly  
mead-cup nods:

<sup>1</sup>Jehovah.



XXIV

"And when, at length, 'Great Pan is dead' uprose the  
loud and dol'orous cry,  
"A glamour wither'd on the ground, a splendour  
faded in the sky.

XXV

"Yea, Pan was dead, the Nazar'ene came and seized  
his seat beneath the sun,  
"The votary of the Riddle-god, whose one is three  
and three is one;

XXVI

"Whose sadd'ening creed of herited Sin spilt o'er the  
world its cold grey spell;  
"In every vista showed a grave, and 'neath the grave  
the glare of Hell;

XXVII

"Till all Life's Po'esy sinks to prose; romance to dull  
Real'ity fades;  
"Earth's flush of gladness pales in gloom and God  
again to man degrades.







XXVIII

"Then the lank Arab foul with sweat, the drainer of  
the camel's dug,  
"Gorged with his leek-green lizard's meat, clad in his  
filthy rag and rug,

XXIX

"Bore his fierce Allah o'er his sands and broke, like  
lava-burst, upon  
"The realms where reigned pre-Adamite Kings, where  
rose the grand Kayânian throne.<sup>1</sup>

XXX

"Who now of ancient Kayomurs, of Zâl or Rustam  
cares to sing,  
"Whelmed by the tempest of the tribes that called  
the Camel-driver King?

XXXI

"Where are the crown of Kay Khusraw, the sceptre  
of Anûshirwân,  
"The holy grail of high Jamshîd, Afrâsiyab's hall?—  
Canst tell me, man?

<sup>1</sup> Kayâni—of the race of Cyrus; old Guebre heroes.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XXXII

"Gone, gone, where I and thou must go, borne by the  
winnowing wings of Death,  
"The Horror brooding over life, and nearer brought  
with every breath:

XXXIII

"Their fame hath filled the Seven Climes, they rose  
and reigned, they fought and fell,  
"As swells and swoons across the wold the tinkling  
of the Camel's bell."



---

# THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---



## F I F T H   P A R T

### I

There is no Good, there is no Bad; these be the whims  
of mortal will:

What works me weal, that call I 'good,' what harms  
and hurts I hold as 'ill':

### II

They change with place, they shift with race; and, in  
the veriest span of Time,  
Each Vice has worn a Virtue's crown; all Good was  
banned as Sin or Crime:

### III

Like ravelled skeins they cross and twine, while this  
with that connects and blends;  
And only Khizr<sup>1</sup> his eye shall see where one begins,  
where other ends:

<sup>1</sup> Supposed to be the Prophet Elijah.





---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

IV

What mortal shall consort with Khizr, when Musâ  
turned in fear to flee?

What man foresees the flow'er or fruit whom Fate  
compels to plant the tree?

V

For Man's Free-will immortal Law, Anagkê, Kismet,  
Des'tiny read

That was, that is, that aye shall be, Star, Fortune, Fate,  
Urd, Norn or Need.

VI

"Man's nat'ural State is God's design"; such is the silly  
sage's theme;

"Man's primal Age was Age of Gold"; such is the  
Poet's waking dream:

VII

Delusion, Ign'orance! Long ere Man drew upon Earth  
his earli'est breath

The world was one contin'uous scene of anguish, tor-  
ture, prey and Death;



VIII

Where hideous Theria of the wild rended their fellows  
limb by limb;  
Where horrid Saurians of the sea in waves of blood  
were wont to swim:

IX

The "fair young Earth" was only fit to spawn her  
frightful monster-brood;  
Now fiery hot, now icy frore, now reeking wet with  
steamy flood.

X

Yon glorious Sun, the greater light, the "Bride-  
groom" of the royal Lyre,  
A flaming, boiling, bursting mine; a grim black orb  
of whirling fire:

XI

That gentle Moon, the lesser light, the Lover's lamp,  
the Swain's delight,  
A ruined world, a globe burnt out, a corpse upon the  
road of night.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XII

What reckt he, say, of Good or Ill who in the hill-  
hole made his lair,  
The blood-fed rav'ening Beast of prey, wilder than  
wildest wolf or bear?

XIII

How long in Man's pre-Ad'amite days to feed and  
swill, to sleep and breed,  
Were the Brute-biped's only life, a perfect life sans  
Code or Creed?

XIV

His choicest garb a shaggy fell, his choicest tool a flake  
of stone;  
His best of orn'aments tattoo'd skin and holes to hang  
his bits of bone;

XV

Who fought for female as for food when Mays awoke  
to warm desire;  
And such the Lust that grew to Love when Fancy  
lent a purer fire.







XVI

Where *then* "Th' Eternal nature-law by God engraved  
on human heart"?  
Behold his simiad sponce and own the Thing could  
play nō higher part.

XVII

Yet, as long ages rolled, he learnt from Beaver, Ape  
and Ant to build  
Shelter for sire and dam and brood, from blast and  
blaze that hurt and killed;

XVIII

And last came Fire; when scrap of stone cast on the  
flame that lit his den,  
Gave out the shining ore, and made the Lord of beasts  
a Lord of men.

XIX

The "moral sense," your Zâhid-phrase, is but the gift  
of latest years;  
Conscience was born when man had shed his fur, his  
tail, his pointed ears.



XX

What conscience has the murd'rous Moor, who slays  
his guest with felon blow,  
Save sorrow he can slay no more, what prick of pen'-  
itence can he know?

XXI

You cry the "Cruelty of Things" is myst'ery to your  
purbblind eye,  
Which fixed upon a point in space, the general project  
passes by:

XXII

For see! the Mammoth went his ways, became a mem'-  
ory and a name;  
While the half-reasoner with the hand<sup>1</sup> survives his  
rank and place to claim.

XXIII

Earthquake and plague, storm, fight and fray, portents  
and curses man must deem  
Since he regards his self alone, nor cares to trace the  
scope, the scheme;

<sup>1</sup>The Elephant.





---

THE KASĪDAH OF HÂJĪ ABDŪ EL-YEZDĪ

---

XXIV

The Quake that comes in eyelid's beat to ruin, level,  
'gulf and kill,  
Builds up a world for better use, to general Good  
bends special Ill:

XXV

The dreadest sound man's ear can hear, the war and  
rush of stormy Wind  
Depures the stuff of human life, breeds health and  
strength for humankind:

XXVI

What call ye them or Goods or Ills, ill-goods, good-  
ills, a loss, a gain,  
When realms arise and falls a roof; a world is won,  
a man is slain?

XXVII

And thus the race of Being runs, till haply in the time  
to be  
Earth shifts her pole and Mushtari-<sup>1</sup>men another fall-  
ing star shall see:

<sup>1</sup>The Planet Jupiter.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XXVIII

Shall see it fall and fade from sight, whence come,  
where gone no Thought can tell,—

Drink of yon mirage-stream and chase the tinkling of  
the camel-bell!



---

# THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---



## SIXTH PART

### I

All Faith is false, all Faith is true: Truth is the shattered mirror strown  
In myriad bits; while each believes his little bit the whole to own.

### II

What is the Truth? was askt of yore. Reply all object  
Truth is one  
As twain of halves aye makes a whole; the moral Truth  
for all is none.

### III

Ye scantily-learned Zâhids learn from Aflatûn and  
Aristû,<sup>1</sup>  
While Truth is real like your good: th' Untrue, like  
ill, is real too;

<sup>1</sup>Plato and Aristotle.



IV

As palace mirror'd in the stream, as vapour mingled  
with the skies,  
So weaves the brain of mortal man the tangled web  
of Truth and Lies.

V

What see we here? Forms, nothing more! Forms fill  
the brightest strongest eye,  
We know not substance; 'mid the shades shadows  
ourselves we live and die.

VI

"Faith mountains moves," I hear: I see the practice of  
the world unheed  
The foolish vaunt, the blatant boast that serves our  
vanity to feed.

VII

"Faith stands unmoved"; and why? Because man's  
silly fancies still remain,  
And will remain till wiser man the day-dreams of his  
youth disdain.







VIII

“’Tis blessèd to believe,” you say: The saying may be  
true enow  
An it can add to Life a light:—only remains to show  
us how.

IX

E’en if I could I nould believe your tales and fables  
stale and trite,  
Irksome as twice-sung tune that tires the dullèd ear  
of drowsy wight.

X

With God’s foreknowledge man’s free will! what  
monster-growth of human brain,  
What pow’ers of light shall ever pierce this puzzle  
dense with words inane?

XI

Vainly the heart on Providence calls, such aid to seek  
were hardly wise,  
For man must own the pitiless Law that sways the  
globe and sevenfold skies.





XII

"Be ye Good Boys, go seek for Heav'en, come pay  
the priest that holds the key";  
So spake, and speaks, and aye shall speak the last to  
enter Heaven,—he.

XIII

Are these the words for men to hear? yet such the  
Church's general tongue,  
The horseleech-cry so strong so high her heav'enward  
Psalms and Hymns among.

XIV

What? Faith a merit and a claim, when with the brain  
'tis born and bred?  
Go, fool, thy foolish way and dip in holy water buried  
dead!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In the 1894 edition of *The Kasidah*, Lady Burton has a note of her own on Section VI, Couplet xiv:

"I think he is alluding, though he has not expressed it, to the Marcionites' heresy of baptizing for the dead. The Marcionites were heretics who lived at Sinope, A.D. 150. Marcion came to Rome and believed in principles similar to the Manichæans. When a man died, one of the Marcionites sat on his coffin, and another asked him if he were willing to be baptized, and he answered, 'Yes,' upon which he was baptized. These heretics quoted Paul (1 Cor. xv., 29), 'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?' Dr. E. Berdoe says 'that this line has no reference to the Marcionite heresy at all, but to Holy baptism, wherein we are buried with Christ. The reference is manifestly to Romans vi., 4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," and the following context.'"



XV

Yet follow not th' un wisdom-path, cleave not to this  
and that disclaim;  
Believe in all that man believes; here all and naught  
are both the same.

XVI

But is it so? How may we know? Haply this Fate, this  
Law may be  
A word, a sound, a breath; at most the Zâhid's moon-  
struck theory.

XVII

Yes, Truth may be, but 'tis not Here; mankind must  
seek and find it There,  
But Where nor *I* nor *you* can tell, nor aught earth-  
mother ever bare.

XVIII

Enough to think that Truth can be: come sit we where  
the roses glow,  
Indeed he knows not how to know who knows not  
also how to 'unknow.





SEVENTH PART

I

Man hath no Soul, a state of things, a no-thing still,  
a sound, a word  
Which so begets substantial thing that eye shall see  
what ear hath heard.

II

Where was his Soul the savage beast which in pri-  
meval forest strayed,  
What shape had it, what dwelling-place, what part  
in nature's plan it played?

III

This Soul to ree a riddle made; who wants the vain  
duality?  
Is not myself enough for me? what need of "I" within  
an "I"?



IV

Words, words that gender things! The soul is a new-  
comer on the scene;  
Sufficeth not the breath of Life to work the matter-  
born machine?

V

We know the Gen'esis of the Soul; we trace the Soul  
to hour of birth;  
We mark its growth as grew mankind to boast him-  
self sole Lord of Earth:

VI

The race of Be'ing from dawn of Life in an unbroken  
course was run;  
What men are pleased to call their Souls was in the  
hog and dog begun:

VII

Life is a ladder infinite-stepped, that hides its rungs  
from human eyes;  
Planted its foot in chaos-gloom, its head soars high  
above the skies:



VIII

No break the chain of Being bears; all things began  
in unity;  
And lie the links in regular line though haply none  
the sequence see.

IX

The Ghost, embodied natural Dread of dreary death  
and foul decay,  
Begot the Spirit, Soul and Shade with Hades' pale and  
wan array.

X

The Soul required a greater Soul, a Soul of Souls, to  
rule the host;  
Hence spirit-powers and hierarchies, all gendered by  
the savage Ghost.

XI

Not yours, ye Peoples of the Book, these fairy visions  
fair and fond,  
Got by the gods of Khemi-land<sup>1</sup> and faring far the  
seas beyond!

<sup>1</sup> Egypt; Kam, Kem, Khem (hierogl.), in the Demotic Khemi.







XII

"Th' immortal mind of mortal man!" we hear yon  
loud-lunged Zealot cry;  
Whose mind but means his sum of thought, and es-  
sence of atomic "I."

XIII

Thought is the work of brain and nerve, in small-  
skulled idiot poor and mean;  
In sickness sick, in sleep asleep, and dead when Death  
lets drop the scene.

XIV

"Tush!" quoth the Zâhid, "well we ken the teaching  
of the school abhorr'd  
"That maketh man automaton, mind a secretion, soul  
a word.

XV

"Of molecules and protoplasm you matter-mongers  
prompt to prate;  
"Of jelly-speck, development and apes that grew to  
man's estate."





XVI

Vain cavil! all that is hath come either by Mir'acle or  
by Law;—  
Why waste on this your hate and fear, why waste on  
that your love and awe?

XVII

Why heap such hatred on a word, why "Prototype"  
to type assign,  
Why upon matter spirit mass? wants an appendix your  
design?

XVIII

Is not the highest honour his who from the worst  
hath drawn the best;  
May not your Maker make the world from matter, an  
it suit His best?

XIX

Nay more, the sordider the stuff, the cunninger the  
workman's hand:  
Cease, then, your own Almighty Power to bind, to  
bound, to understand.



XX

"Reason and Instinct!" How we love to play with  
words that please our pride;  
Our noble race's mean descent by false forged titles  
seek to hide!

XXI

For "gift divine" I bid you read the better work of  
higher brain,  
From Instinct diff'ering in degree as golden mine  
from leaden vein.

XXII

Reason is Life's sole arbiter, the magic Laby'rinth's  
single clue:  
Worlds lie above, beyond its ken; what crosses it can  
ne'er be true.

XXIII

"Fools rush where Angels fear to tread!" Angels and  
Fools have equal claim  
To do what Nature bids them do, sans hope of praise,  
sans fear of blame!





E I G H T H   P A R T

I

There is no Heav'en, there is no Hell; these be the  
dreams of baby minds,  
Tools of the wily Fetisheer, to 'fright the fools his  
cunning blinds.

II

Learn from the mighty Spi'rits of old to set thy foot  
on Heav'en and Hell;  
In Life to find thy hell and heav'en as thou abuse or  
use it well.

III

So deemed the doughty Jew who dared by studied  
silence low to lay  
Orcus and Hades, lands of shades, the gloomy night  
of human day.



IV

Hard to the heart is final death: fain would an *Ens*  
not end in *Nil*;  
Love made the senti'ment kindly good: the Priest  
perverted all to ill.

V

While Reason sternly bids us die, Love longs for life  
beyond the grave:  
Our hearts, affections, hopes and fears for Life-to-be  
shall ever crave.

VI

Hence came the despot's darling dream, a Church to  
rule and sway the State;  
Hence sprang the train of countless griefs in priestly  
sway and rule innate.

VII

For future Life who dares reply? No witness at the  
bar have we;  
Save what the brother Potsherd tells,—old tales and  
novel jugglery.



VIII

Who e'er return'd to teach the Truth, the things of  
Heaven and Hell to limn?  
And all we hear is only fit for grandam-talk and nur-  
sery-hymn.

IX

"Have mercy, man!" the Zâhid cries, "of our best  
visions rob us not!  
"Mankind a future life must have to balance life's un-  
equal lot."

X

"Nay," quoth the Magian, "'tis not so; I draw my wine  
for one and all,  
"A cup for this, a score for that, e'en as his measure's  
great or small:"

XI

"Who drinks one bowl hath scant delight; to poorest  
passion he was born;  
"Who drains the score must e'er expect to rue the  
headache of the morn."







XII

Safely he jogs along the way which "Golden Mean"  
the sages call;  
Who scales the brow of frowning Alp must face full  
many a slip and fall.

XIII

Here extremes meet, anointed Kings whose crownèd  
heads uneasy lie,  
Whose cup of joy contains no more than tramps, that  
on the dunghill die.

XIV

To fate-doomed Sinner born and bred for dangling  
from the gallows-tree;  
To Saint who spends his holy days in rapt'urous hope  
his God to see;

XV

To all that breathe our upper air the hands of Dest'iny  
ever deal,  
In fixed and equal parts, their shares of joy and sorrow,  
woe and weal.





XVI

"How comes it, then, our span of days in hunting  
wealth and fame we spend?  
"Why strive we (and all humans strive) for vain and  
visionary end?"

XVII

Reply: mankind obeys a law that bids him labour,  
struggle, strain;  
The Sage well knowing its unworth, the Fool a-dream-  
ing foolish gain.

XVIII

And who, 'mid e'en the Fools, but feels that half the  
joy is in the race  
For wealth and fame and place, nor sighs when comes  
success to crown the chase?

XIX

Again: In Hind, Chîn, Franguestân that accident of  
birth befell,  
Without our choice, our will, our voice: Faith is an  
accident as well.



---

THE KASĪDAH OF HÂJĪ ABDŪ EL-YEZDĪ

---

XX

What to the Hindu saith the Frank? "Denier of the  
Laws divine!

"However godly-good thy Life, Hell is the home for  
thee and thine.

XXI

"Go strain the draught before 'tis drunk, and learn  
that breathing every breath,

"With every step, with every gest, some thing of life  
thou do'est to death."

XXII

Replies the Hindu: "Wend thy way for foul and fool-  
ish Mlenchhas fit;

"Your Pariah-par'adise woo and win; at such dog-  
Heav'en I laugh and spit.

XXIII

"Cannibals of the Holy Cow! who make your rav'en-  
ing maws the grave

"Of Things with self-same right to live;—what Fiend  
the filthy license gave?"



XXIV

What to the Moslem cries the Frank? "A polygamic  
Theist thou!

"From an impostor-Prophet turn; thy stubborn head  
to Jesus bow."

XXV

Rejoins the Moslem: "Allah's one tho' with four Mos-  
lemahs I wive,

"One-wife-men ye and (damnèd race!) you split your  
God to Three and Five."

XXVI

The Buddhist to Confucians thus: "Like dogs ye live,  
like dogs ye die;

"Content ye rest with wretched earth; God, Judgment,  
Hell ye fain defy."

XXVII

Retorts the Tartar: "Shall I lend mine only ready-  
money 'now,'

For vain usurious 'Then' like thine, avaunt, a triple  
idiot Thou!"



XXVIII

"With this poor life, with this mean world I fain complete what in me lies;  
I strive to perfect this my me; my sole ambition's to be wise."

XXIX

When doctors differ who decides amid the milliard-headed throng?  
Who save the madman dares to cry: "'Tis I am right you all are wrong"?

XXX

"You all are right, you all are wrong," we hear the careless Soofi say,  
"For each believes his glimm'ering lamp to be the gorgeous light of day."

XXXI

"*Thy* faith why false, *my* faith why true? 'tis all the work of Thine and Mine,  
"The fond and foolish love of self that makes the Mine excel the Thine."



---

THE KASĪDAH OF HĀJĪ ABDŪ EL-YEZDĪ

---

XXXII

Cease then to mumble rotten bones; and strive to  
    clothe with flesh and blood  
The skel'eton; and to shape a Form that all shall hail  
    as fair and good.

XXXIII

"For gen'eros youth," an Arab saith, "Jahim's<sup>1</sup> the  
    only genial state;  
"Give us the fire but not the shame with the sad, sorry  
    blest to mate."

XXXIV

And if your Heav'en and Hell be true, and Fate that  
    forced me to be born  
Force me to Heav'en or Hell—I go, and hold Fate's  
    insolence in scorn.

XXXV

I want not this, I want not that, already sick of Me  
    and Thee;  
And if we're both transform'd and changed, what then  
    becomes of Thee and Me?

<sup>1</sup> Jehannum, Gehenna, Hell.







XXXVI

Enough to think such things may be: to say they are  
not or they are  
Were folly: leave them all to Fate, nor wage on shadows  
useless war.

XXXVII

Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from none but  
self expect applause;  
He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps  
his self-made laws.

XXXVIII

All other Life is living Death, a world where none  
but Phantoms dwell,  
A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling of the  
camel-bell.







N I N T H   P A R T

I

How then shall man so order life that when his tale  
of years is told,  
Like sated guests he wend his way; how shall his even  
tenour hold?

II

Despite the Writ that stores the skull; despite the Table  
and the Pen;<sup>1</sup>  
Maugre the Fate that plays us down, her board the  
world, her pieces men?

III

How when the light and glow of life wax dim in  
thickly gath'ring gloom,  
Shall mortal scoff at sting of Death, shall scorn the  
victory of the Tomb?

<sup>1</sup> Emblems of Kismet, or Destiny.



IV

One way, two paths, one end the grave. This runs  
athwart the flow'ery plain,  
That breasts the bush, the steep, the crag, in sun and  
wind and snow and rain:

V

Who treads the first must look adown, must deem his  
life an all in all;  
Must see no heights where man may rise, must sight  
no depths where man may fall.

VI

Allah in Adam form must view; adore the Maker in  
the made,  
Content to bask in Mâyâ's smile,<sup>1</sup> in joys of pain, in  
lights of shade.

VII

He breaks the Law, he burns the Book, he sends the  
Moolah back to school;  
Laughs at the beards of Saintly men; and dubs the  
Prophet dolt and fool,

<sup>1</sup> Illusion.



VIII

Embraces Cypress' taper-waist; cools feet on wavy  
breast of rill;  
Smiles in the Nargis' love-lorne eyes, and 'joys the dance  
of Daffodil;

IX

Melts in the saffron light of Dawn to hear the moan-  
ing of the Dove;  
Delights in Sundown's purpling hues when Bulbul  
woos the Rose's love.

X

Finds mirth and joy in Jamshid-bowl; toys with the  
Daughter of the vine;  
And bids the beauteous cup-boy say, "Master, I bring  
thee ruby wine!"<sup>1</sup>

XI

Sips from the maiden's lips the dew; brushes the bloom  
from virgin brow:—  
Such is his fleshly bliss that strives the Maker through  
the Made to know.

<sup>1</sup>That all the senses, even the ear, may enjoy.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XII

I've tried them all, I find them all so same and tame,  
so drear, so dry;  
My gorge ariseth at the thought; I commune with my-  
self and cry:—

XIII

Better the myriad toils and pains that make the man  
to manhood true,  
This be the rule that guideth life; these be the laws  
for me and you:

XIV

With Ignor'ance wage eternal war, to know thy self  
for ever strain,  
'Thine ignorance of thine ignorance is thy fiercest foe,  
thy deadliest bane;

XV

That blunts thy sense, and dulls thy taste; that deafs  
thine ears, and blinds thine eyes;  
Creates the thing that never was, the Thing that ever  
is defies.



XVI

The finite Atom infinite that forms thy circle's centre-dot,  
So full-sufficient for itself, for other selves existing  
not,

XVII

Finds the world mighty as 'tis small; yet must be fought  
the unequal fray;  
A myriad giants here; and there a pinch of dust, a  
clod of clay.

XVIII

Yes! maugre all thy dreams of peace still must the  
fight unfair be fought;  
Where thou mayst learn the noblest lore, to know  
that all we know is nought.

XIX

True to thy Nature, to Thy self, Fame and Disfame  
nor hope nor fear:  
Enough to thee the small still voice aye thund'ring  
in thine inner ear.







XX

From self-approval seek applause: What ken not men  
thou kennest, thou!  
Spurn ev'ry idol others raise: Before thine own Ideal  
bow:

XXI

Be thine own Deus: Make self free, liberal as the cir-  
cling air:  
Thy Thought to thee an Empire be; break every pris-  
on'ing lock and bar:

XXII

Do thou the Ought to self aye owed; here all the  
duties meet and blend,  
In widest sense, withouten care of what began, for  
what shall end.

XXIII

Thus, as thou view the Phantom-forms which in the  
misty Past were thine,  
To be again the thing thou wast with honest pride  
thou may'st decline;





XXIV

And, glancing down the range of years, fear not thy  
future self to see;  
Resign'd to life, to death resign'd, as though the choice  
were nought to thee.

XXV

On Thought itself feed not thy thought; nor turn from  
Sun and Light to gaze  
At darkling cloisters paved with tombs, where rot the  
bones of bygone days:

XXVI

"Eat not thy heart," the Sages said; "nor mourn the  
Past, the buried Past";  
Do what thou dost, be strong, be brave; and, like  
the Star, nor rest nor haste.

XXVII

Pluck the old woman from thy breast: Be stout in  
woe, be stark in weal;  
Do good, for Good is good to do: Spurn bribe of  
Heav'en and threat of Hell.



---

## THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

### XXVIII

To seek the True, to glad the heart, such is of life the  
HIGHER LAW,  
Whose differ'ence is the Man's degree, the Man of  
gold, the Man of straw.

### XXIX

See not that something in Mankind that rouses hate  
or scorn or strife,  
Better the worm of Izrâil<sup>1</sup> than Death that walks in  
form of life.

### XXX

Survey thy kind as One whose wants in the great Hu-  
man Whole unite;<sup>2</sup>  
The Homo rising high from earth to seek the Heav'ens  
of Life-in-Light;

### XXXI

And hold Humanity one man, whose universal agony  
Still strains and strives to gain the goal, where agonies  
shall cease to be.

<sup>1</sup>The Angel of Death.

<sup>2</sup>The "Great Man" of the Enochites and the  
Mormons.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XXXII

Believe in all things; none believe; judge not nor warp  
by "Facts" the thought;  
See clear, hear clear, tho' life may seem Mâyâ and  
Mirage, Dream and Nought.

XXXIII

Abjure the Why and seek the How: the God and gods  
enthroned on high  
Are silent all, are silent still; nor hear thy voice, nor  
deign reply.

XXXIV

The Now, that indivis'ible point which studs the  
length of inf'inite line  
Whose ends are nowhere, is thine all, the puny all  
thou callest thine.

XXXV

Perchance the law some Giver hath: Let be! let be!  
what canst thou know?  
A myriad races came and went; this Sphinx hath seen  
them come and go.



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XXXVI

Haply the Law that rules the world allows to man  
the widest range;  
And haply Fate's a Theist-word, subject to human  
chance and change.

XXXVII

This "I" may find a future Life, a nobler copy of our  
own,  
Where every riddle shall be reed, where every knowl-  
edge shall be known;

XXXVIII

Where 'twill be man's to see the whole of what on  
Earth he sees in part;  
Where change shall ne'er surcharge the thought; nor  
hope defer'd shall hurt the heart.

XXXIX

But!—faded flow'er and fallen leaf no more shall deck  
the parent tree;  
And man once dropt by 'Tree of Life what hope of  
other life has he?



---

THE KASÎDAH OF HÂJÎ ABDÛ EL-YEZDÎ

---

XL

The shatter'd bowl shall know repair; the riven lute  
shall sound once more;  
But who shall mend the clay of man, the stolen breath  
to man restore?

XLI

The shiver'd clock again shall strike; the broken reed  
shall pipe again:  
But we, we die, and Death is one, the doom of brutes,  
the doom of men.

XLII

Then, if Nirwânâ<sup>1</sup> round our life with nothingness,  
'tis haply best;  
Thy toils and troubles, want and woe at length have  
won their guerdon—Rest.

XLIII

Cease, Abdû, cease! Thy song is sung, nor think the  
gain the singer's prize;  
Till men hold Ignor'ance deadly sin, till man deserves  
his title "Wise":<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Comparative annihilation.

<sup>2</sup>"Homo sapiens."



XLIV

In Days to come, Days slow to dawn, when Wisdom  
deigns to dwell with men,  
These echoes of a voice long stilled haply shall wake  
responsive strain:

XLV

Wend now thy way with brow serene, fear not thy  
humble tale to tell:—  
The whispers of the Desert-wind; the Tinkling of the  
camel's-bell.

שלם





*NOTES  
ON  
THE KASĪDAH*







## NOTE I

### HÂJÎ ABDÛ, THE MAN

HÂJÎ ABDÛ has been known to me for more years than I care to record. A native, it is believed, of Darâbghird in the Yezd Province, he always preferred to style himself El-Hichmakâni, a facetious "lackab" or surname, meaning "Of No-hall, Nowhere." He had travelled far and wide with his eyes open; as appears by his "couplets." To a natural facility, a knack of language-learning, he added a store of desultory various reading; scraps of Chinese and old Egyptian; of Hebrew and Syriac; of Sanskrit and Prakrit; of Slav, especially Lithuanian; of Latin and Greek, including Romaic; of Berber, the Nubian dialect, and of Zend and Akkadian, besides Persian, his mother-tongue, and Arabic, the classic of the schools. Nor was he ignorant of "the -ologies" and the triumphs of modern scientific discovery. Briefly, his memory was well-stored; and he had every talent save that of using his talents.

But no one thought that he "woo'd the Muse," to speak in the style of the last century. Even his intimates were ignorant of the fact that he had a skeleton in his cupboard, his Kasidah or distichs. He confided to me his secret when we last met in Western India—I am purposely vague in specifying the place. When so doing he held in hand the long and hoary honours of his chin with the points towards me, as if to say with the Island-King:

There is a touch of Winter in my beard,  
A sign the Gods will guard me from imprudence.

And yet the piercing eye, clear as an onyx, seemed to protest against the plea of age. The manuscript was in the vilest "Shikastah" or running-hand; and, as I carried it off, the writer declined to take the trouble of copying out his cacograph.

We, his old friends, had long addressed Hâjî Abdû by the sobriquet of *Nabbianâ* ("our Prophet"); and the reader will see that the Pilgrim has,

---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

or believes he has, a message to deliver. He evidently aspires to preach a Faith of his own; an Eastern Version of Humanitarianism blended with the sceptical or, as we now say, the scientific habit of mind. This religion, of which Fetishism, Hinduism and Heathendom; Judaism, Christianity and Islamism are mere fractions, may, methinks, be accepted by the Philosopher: it worships with single-minded devotion the Holy Cause of Truth, of Truth for its own sake, not for the goods it may bring; and this belief is equally acceptable to honest ignorance, and to the highest attainments in nature-study.

With Confucius the Hâjî cultivates what Strauss has called the "stern common sense of mankind"; while the reign of order is a paragraph of his "Higher Law." He traces from its rudest beginnings the all but absolute universality of some perception by man, called "Faith"; that *sensus Numinis* which, by inheritance or communication, is now universal except in those who force themselves to oppose it. And he evidently holds this general consent of mankind to be so far divine that it primarily discovered for itself, if it did not create, a divinity. He does not cry with the Christ of Novalis, "Children, you have no father"; and perhaps he would join Renan in exclaiming, *Un monde sans Dieu est horrible!*

But he recognises the incompatibility of the Infinite with the Definite; of a Being who loves, who thinks, who hates; of an *Actus purus* who is called jealous, wrathful and revengeful, with an "Eternal that makes for righteousness." In the presence of the endless contradictions, which spring from the idea of a Personal Deity, with the Synthesis, the *Begriff* of Providence, our Agnostic takes refuge in the sentiment of an unknown and an unknowable. He objects to the countless variety of forms assumed by the perception of a *Causa Causans* (a misnomer), and to that intellectual adoption of general propositions, capable of distinct statement but incapable of proofs, which we term Belief.

He looks with impartial eye upon the endless variety of systems, maintained with equal confidence and self-sufficiency; by men of equal ability and honesty. He is weary of wandering over the world, and of finding every petty race wedded to its own opinions; claiming the monopoly of Truth; holding all others to be in error, and raising disputes whose violence, acerbity and virulence are in inverse ratio to the importance of the disputed matter. A peculiarly active and acute observation taught him that many of these jarring families, especially those of the same blood, are

par in the intellectual processes of perception and reflection; that in the business of the visible working world they are confessedly by no means superior to one another; whereas in abstruse matters of mere Faith, not admitting direct and sensual evidence, one in a hundred will claim to be right, and immodestly charge the other ninety-nine with being wrong.

Thus he seeks to discover a system which will prove them all right, and all wrong; which will reconcile their differences; will unite past creeds; will account for the present, and will anticipate the future with a continuous and uninterrupted development; this, too, by a process, not negative and distinctive, but, on the contrary, intensely positive and constructive. I am not called upon to sit in the seat of judgment; but I may say that it would be singular if the attempt succeeded. Such a system would be all-comprehensive, because not limited by space, time, or race; its principle would be extensive as Matter itself, and, consequently, eternal. Meanwhile he satisfies himself,—the main point.

Students of metaphysics have of late years defined the abuse of their science as "morphology of common opinion." Contemporary investigators, they say, have been too much occupied with introspection; their labours have become merely physiologico-biographical, and they have greatly neglected the study of averages. For, says La Rochefoucauld, *Il est plus aisé de connoître l'homme en général que de connoître un homme en particulier*; and on so wide a subject all views must be one-sided.

But this is not the fashion of Easterns. They have still to treat great questions *ex analogiâ universi*, instead of *ex analogiâ hominis*. They must learn the basis of sociology, the philosophic conviction that mankind should be studied, not as a congeries of individuals, but as an organic whole. Hence the *Zeitgeist*, or historical evolution of the collective consciousness of the age, despises the obsolete opinion that Society, the State, is bound by the same moral duties as the simple citizen. Hence, too, it holds that the "spirit of man, being of equal and uniform substance, doth usually suppose and feign in nature a greater equality and uniformity than is in Truth."

Christianity and Islamism have been on their trial for the last eighteen and twelve centuries. They have been ardent in proselytizing, yet they embrace only one-tenth and one-twentieth of the human race. Hâjî Abdû would account for the tardy and unsatisfactory progress of what their votaries call "pure truths," by the innate imperfections of the same. Both

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

propose a reward for mere belief, and a penalty for simple unbelief; rewards and punishments being, by the way, very disproportionate. Thus they reduce everything to the scale of a somewhat unrefined egotism; and their demoralizing effects become clearer to every progressive age.

Hâjî Abdû seeks Truth only, truth as far as man, in the present phase of his development, is able to comprehend it. He disdains to associate utility, like Bacon (Nov. Org. I. Aph. 124), the High Priest of the English Creed, *le gros bon sens*, with the *lumen siccum ac purum notionum verarum*. He seems to see the injury inflicted upon the sum of thought by the *à posteriori* superstition, the worship of "facts," and the deification of synthesis. Lastly, came the reckless way in which Locke "freed philosophy from the incubus of innate ideas." Like Luther and the leaders of the great French Revolution, he broke with the Past; and he threw overboard the whole cargo of human tradition. The result has been an immense movement of the mind which we love to call Progress, when it has often been retrograde; together with a mighty development of egotism resulting from the pampered sentiment of personality.

The Hâjî regrets the excessive importance attached to a possible future state: he looks upon this as a psychical stimulant, a day dream, whose revulsion and reaction disorder waking life. The condition may appear humble and prosaic to those exalted by the fumes of Fancy, by a spiritual dram-drinking which, like the physical, is the pursuit of an ideal happiness. But he is too wise to affirm or to deny the existence of another world. For life beyond the grave there is no consensus of mankind, no Catholic opinion held *semper, et ubique, et ab omnibus*. The intellectual faculties (perception and reflection) are mute upon the subject: they bear no testimony to facts; they show no proof. Even the instinctive sense of our kind is here dumb. We may believe what we are taught: we can know nothing. He would, therefore, cultivate that receptive mood which, marching under the shadow of mighty events, leads to the highest of goals,—the development of Humanity. With him suspension of judgment is a system.

Man has done much during the sixty-eight centuries which represent his history. This assumes the first Egyptian Empire, following the prehistoric, to begin with B. C. 5000, and to end with B. C. 3249. It was the Old, as opposed to the Middle, the New, and the Low: it contained the Dynasties from I. to X., and it was the age of the Pyramids, at once simple, solid, and grand. When the praiser of the Past contends that modern civi-

---

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

lization has improved in nothing upon Homer and Herodotus, he is apt to forget that every schoolboy is a miracle of learning compared with the Cave-man and the palæolithic race. And, as the Past has been, so shall the Future be.

The Pilgrim's view of life is that of the Soofi, with the usual dash of Buddhistic pessimism. The profound sorrow of existence, so often sung by the dreamy Eastern poet, has now passed into the practical European mind. Even the light Frenchman murmurs,—

Moi, moi, chaque jour courbant plus bas ma tête  
Je passe—et refroidi sous ce soleil joyeux,  
Je m'en irai bientôt, au milieu de la fête,  
Sans que rien manque au monde immense et radieux.

But our Hâjî is not Nihilistic in the "no-nothing" sense of Hood's poem, or, as the American phrases it, "There is nothing new, nothing true, and it don't signify." His is a healthy wail over the shortness, and the miseries of life, because he finds all created things—

Measure the world, with "Me" immense.

He reminds us of St. Augustine (Med. c. 21). "Vita hæc, vita misera, vita caduca, vita incerta, vita laboriosa, vita immunda, vita domina malorum, regina superborum, plena miseriis et erroribus . . . Quam humores tumidant, escæ inflant, jejunia macerant, joci dissolvunt, tristitiæ consumunt; sollicitudo coarctat, securitas hebetat, divitiæ inflant et jactant. Paupertas dejicit, juvenus extollit, senectus incurvat, importunitas frangit, mæror deprimit. Et his malis omnibus mors furibunda succedit." But for *furibunda* the Pilgrim would, perhaps, read *benedicta*.

With Cardinal Newman, one of the glories of our age, Hâjî Abdû finds "the Light of the world nothing else than the Prophet's scroll, full of lamentations and mourning and woe." I cannot refrain from quoting all this fine passage, if it be only for the sake of its lame and shallow deduction. "To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history and the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts, and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution (!) of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes; the great-

---



---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

ness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims and short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world'—*all this is a vision to dizzy and appal, and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery which is absolutely without human solution.*" Hence that admirable writer postulates some "terrible original calamity"; and thus the hateful doctrine, theologically called "original sin," becomes to him almost as certain as that "the world exists, and as the existence of God." Similarly the "Schedule of Doctrines" of the most liberal Christian Church insists upon human depravity, and the "absolute need of the Holy Spirit's agency in man's regeneration and sanctification."

But what have we here? The "original calamity" was either caused by God or arose without leave of God, in either case degrading God to man. It is the old dilemma whose horns are the irreconcilable attributes of goodness and omniscience in the supposed Creator of sin and suffering. If the one quality be predicable, the other cannot be predicable of the same subject. Far better and wiser is the essayist's poetical explanation now apparently despised because it was the fashionable doctrine of the sage bard's day:—

All nature is but art \* \*

All discord harmony not understood;

All partial evil universal good.—(Essay 289–292.)

The Pilgrim holds with St. Augustine Absolute Evil is impossible because it is always rising up into good. He considers the theory of a beneficent or maleficent deity a purely sentimental fancy, contradicted by human reason and the aspect of the world. Evil is often the active form of good; as F.W. Newman says, "so likewise is Evil the revelation of Good." With him all existences are equal: so long as they possess the Hindu Agasa, Life-fluid or vital force, it matters not they be,—

Fungus or oak or worm or man.

War, he says, brings about countless individual miseries, but it forwards general progress by raising the stronger upon the ruins of the weaker races. Earthquakes and cyclones ravage small areas; but the former builds up earth for man's habitation, and the latter renders the atmosphere fit for him to breathe. Hence he echoes:

---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

—The universal Cause  
Acts not by partial but by general laws.

Ancillary to the churchman's immoral view of "original sin" is the unscientific theory that evil came into the world with Adam and his seed. Let us ask what was the state of our globe in the pre-Adamite days, when the tyrants of the Earth, the huge Saurians and other monsters, lived in perpetual strife, in a destructiveness of which we have now only the feeblest examples? What is the actual state of the world of waters, where the only object of life is death, where the Law of murder is the Law of Development?

Some will charge the Hâjî with irreverence, and hold him a "lieutenant of Satan who sits in the chair of pestilence." But he is not intentionally irreverent. Like men of far higher strain, who deny divinely the divine, he speaks the things that others think and hide. With the author of "Supernatural Religion," he holds that we "gain infinitely more than we lose in abandoning belief in the reality of revelation"; and he looks forward to the day when "the old tyranny shall have been broken, and when the anarchy of transition shall have passed away." But he is an Eastern. When he repeats the Greek's "Remember not to believe," he means Strive to learn, to know, for right ideas lead to right actions. Among the couplets not translated for this eclogue is:—

Of all the safest ways of Life the safest way is still to doubt,  
Men win the future world with Faith, the present world they win without.

This is the Spaniard's:—

*De las cosas mas seguras, mas seguro es dudar;*

a typically modern sentiment of the Brazen Age of Science following the Golden Age of Sentiment. But the Pilgrim continues:—

The sages say: I tell thee no! with equal faith all Faiths receive;  
None more, none less, for Doubt is Death: they live the most who most believe.

Here, again, is an oriental subtlety; a man who believes in everything equally and generally may be said to believe in nothing. It is not a simple European view which makes honest Doubt worth a dozen of the Creeds. And it is in direct opposition to the noted writer who holds that the man of simple faith is worth ninety-nine of those who hold only to the egoistic interests of their own individuality. This dark saying means (if it mean anything) that the so-called moral faculties of man, fancy and ideal-ity, must lord it over the perceptive and reflective powers,—a simple absurdity! It produced a Turricremata, alias Torquemada, who, shedding



floods of honest tears, caused his victims to be burnt alive; and an Anchieta, the Thaumaturgist of Brazil, who beheaded a converted heretic lest the latter by lapse from grace lose his immortal soul.

But this vein of speculation, which bigots brand as "Doubt, Denial, and Destruction"; this earnest religious scepticism; this curious inquiry, "Has the universal tradition any base of fact?"; this craving after the secrets and mysteries of the future, the unseen, the unknown, is common to all races and to every age. Even amongst the Romans, whose model man in Augustus' day was Horace, the philosophic, the epicurean, we find Propertius asking:—

*An ficta in miseras descendit fabula gentes  
Et timor haud ultra quam rogos esse potest?*

To return: the Pilgrim's doctrines upon the subject of conscience and repentance will startle those who do not follow his train of thought:—

Never repent because thy will with will of Fate be not as one:

Think, an thou please, before thou dost, but never rue the deed when done.

This again is his modified fatalism. He would not accept the boisterous mode of cutting the Gordian-knot proposed by the noble British Philister—"we know we're free and there's an end on it!" He prefers Lamarck's, "The will is, in truth, never free." He believes man to be a co-ordinate term of Nature's great progression; a result of the interaction of organism and environment, working through cosmic sections of time. He views the human machine, the pipe of flesh, as depending upon the physical theory of life. Every corporeal fact and phenomenon which, like the tree, grows from within or without, is a mere product of organization; living bodies being subject to the natural law governing the lifeless and the inorganic. Whilst the religionist assures us that man is not a mere toy of fate, but a free agent responsible to himself, with work to do and duties to perform, the Hâjî, with many modern schools, holds Mind to be a word describing a special operation of matter; the faculties generally to be manifestations of movements in the central nervous system; and every idea, even of the Deity, to be a certain little pulsation of a certain little mass of animal pap,—the brain. Thus he would not object to relationship with a tailless catarrhine anthropoid ape, descended from a monad or a primal ascidian.

Hence he virtually says, "I came into the world without having applied for or having obtained permission; nay, more, without my leave being asked or given. Here I find myself hand-tied by conditions, and fettered by laws and circumstances, in making which my voice had no part. While

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

in the womb I was an automaton; and death will find me a mere machine. Therefore not I, but the Law, or, if you please, the Lawgiver, is answerable for all my actions." Let me here observe that to the Western mind "Law" postulates a Lawgiver; not so to the Eastern, and especially to the Soofi, who holds these ideas to be human, unjustifiably extended to interpreting the non-human, which men call the Divine.

Further he would say, "I am an individual (*qui nil habet dividi*), a circle touching and intersecting my neighbours at certain points, but nowhere corresponding, nowhere blending. Physically I am not identical in all points with other men. Morally I differ from them: in nothing do the approaches of knowledge, my five organs of sense (with their Shelleyan 'interpenetration'), exactly resemble those of any other being. *Ergo*, the effect of the world, of life, of natural objects, will not in my case be the same as with the beings most resembling me. Thus I claim the right of creating or modifying for my own and private use, the system which most imports me; and if the reasonable leave be refused to me, I take it without leave.

"But my individuality, however all-sufficient for myself, is an infinitesimal point, an atom subject in all things to the Law of Storms called Life. I feel, I know that Fate *is*. But I cannot know what is or what is not fated to befall me. Therefore in the pursuit of perfection as an individual lies my highest, and indeed my only duty, the 'I' being duly blended with the 'We.' I object to be a 'selfless man,' which to me denotes an inverted moral sense. I am bound to take careful thought concerning the consequences of every word and deed. When, however, the Future has become the Past, it would be the merest vanity for me to grieve or to repent over that which was decreed by universal Law."

The usual objection is that of man's practice. It says, "This is well in theory; but how carry it out? For instance, why would you kill, or give over to be killed, the man compelled by Fate to kill your father?" Hâjî Abdû replies, "I do as others do, not because the murder was done by him, but because the murderer should not be allowed another chance of murdering. He is a tiger who has tasted blood and who should be shot. I am convinced that he was a tool in the hands of Fate, but that will not prevent my taking measures, whether predestined or not, in order to prevent his being similarly used again."

As with repentance so with conscience. Conscience may be a "fear which is the shadow of justice"; even as pity is the shadow of love. Though

---

simply a geographical and chronological accident, which changes with every age of the world, it may deter men from seeking and securing the prize of successful villany. But this incentive to beneficence must be applied to actions that will be done, not to deeds that have been done.

The Hâjî, moreover, carefully distinguishes between the working of fate under a personal God, and under the Reign of Law. In the former case the contradiction between the foreknowledge of a Creator, and the free-will of a Creature, is direct, palpable, absolute. We might as well talk of black-whiteness and of white-blackness. A hundred generations of divines have never been able to see the riddle; a million will fail. The difficulty is insurmountable to the Theist whose Almighty is perforce Omniscient, and as Omniscient, Prescient. But it disappears when we convert the Person into Law, or a settled order of events; subject, moreover, to certain exceptions fixed and immutable, but at present unknown to man. The difference is essential as that between the penal code with its narrow forbiddal, and the broad commandment which is a guide rather than a task-master.

Thus, too, the belief in fixed Law, versus arbitrary will, modifies the Hâjî's opinions concerning the pursuit of happiness. Mankind, *das rastlose Ursachenthier*, is born to be on the whole equally happy and miserable. The highest organisms, the fine porcelain of our family, enjoy the most and suffer the most: they have a capacity for rising to the empyrean of pleasure and for plunging deep into the swift-flowing river of woe and pain. Thus Dante (Inf. vi. 106):

— tua scienza  
Che vuol, quanto la cosa è più perfetta  
Più senta 'l bene, e così la doglienza.

So Buddhism declares that existence in itself implies effort, pain and sorrow; and, the higher the creature, the more it suffers. The common clay enjoys little and suffers little. Sum up the whole and distribute the mass: the result will be an average; and the beggar is, on the whole, happy as the prince. Why, then, asks the objector, does man ever strive and struggle to change, to rise; a struggle which involves the idea of improving his condition? The Hâjî answers, "Because such is the Law under which man is born: it may be fierce as famine, cruel as the grave, but man must obey it with blind obedience." He does not enter into the question whether life is worth living, whether man should elect to be born. Yet his Eastern

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

pessimism, which contrasts so sharply with the optimism of the West, re-echoes the lines:

— a life,  
With large results so little rife,  
Though bearable seems hardly worth  
This pomp of words, this pain of birth.

Life, whatever may be its consequence, is built upon a basis of sorrow. Literature, the voice of humanity, and the verdict of mankind proclaim that all existence is a state of sadness. The "physicians of the Soul" would save her melancholy from degenerating into despair by doses of steadfast belief in the presence of God, in the assurance of Immortality, and in visions of the final victory of good. Were Hâjî Abdû a mere Theologist, he would add that Sin, not the possibility of revolt, but the revolt itself against conscience, is the primary form of evil, because it produces error, moral and intellectual. This man, who omits to read the Conscience-law, however it may differ from the Society-law, is guilty of negligence. That man, who obscures the light of Nature with sophistries, becomes incapable of discerning his own truths. In both cases error, deliberately adopted, is succeeded by suffering which, we are told, comes in justice and benevolence as a warning, a remedy, and a chastisement.

But the Pilgrim is dissatisfied with the idea that evil originates in the individual actions of free agents, ourselves and others. This doctrine fails to account for its characteristics,—essentiality and universality. That creatures endowed with the mere possibility of liberty should not always choose the Good appears natural. But that of the millions of human beings who have inhabited Earth, not one should have been found invariably to choose Good, proves how insufficient is the solution. Hence no one believes in the existence of the complete man under the present state of things. The Hâjî rejects all popular and mythical explanation by the Fall of "Adam," the innate depravity of human nature, and the absolute perfection of certain Incarnations, which argues their divinity. He can only wail over the prevalence of evil, assume its foundation to be error, and purpose to abate it by uprooting that Ignorance which bears and feeds it.

His "eschatology," like that of the Soofis generally, is vague and shadowy. He may lean towards the doctrine of Marc Aurelius, "The unripe grape, the ripe and the dried: all things are changes not into nothing, but into that which is not at present." This is one of the *monstruosa opinionum portenta* mentioned by the XIXth General Council, alias the First Council

---

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

of the Vatican. But he only accepts it with a limitation. He cleaves to the ethical, not the intellectual, worship of "Nature," which moderns define to be an "unscientific and imaginary synonym for the sum total of observed phenomena." Consequently he holds to the "dark and degrading doctrines of the Materialist," the "Hylotheist"; in opposition to the spiritualist, a distinction far more marked in the West than in the East. Europe draws a hard, dry line between Spirit and Matter: Asia does not.

Among us the Idealist objects to the Materialists that the latter cannot agree upon fundamental points; that they cannot define what is an atom; that they cannot account for the transformation of physical action and molecular motion into consciousness; and *vice versa*, that they cannot say what matter is; and, lastly, that Berkeley and his school have proved the existence of spirit while denying that of matter.

The Materialists reply that the want of agreement shows only a study insufficiently advanced; that man cannot describe an atom, because he is still an infant in science, yet there is no reason why his mature manhood should not pass through error and incapacity to truth and knowledge; that consciousness becomes a property of matter when certain conditions are present; that Hyle (ἵλη) or Matter may be provisionally defined as "phenomena with a substructure of their own, transcendental and eternal, subject to the action, direct or indirect, of the five senses, whilst its properties present themselves in three states, the solid, the liquid, and the gaseous." To casuistical Berkeley they prefer the common sense of mankind. They ask the idealist and the spiritualist why they cannot find names for themselves without borrowing from a "dark and degraded" school; why the former must call himself after his eye (*idein*); the latter after his breath (*spiritus*)? Thus the Hâjî twits them with affixing their own limitations to their own Almighty Power, and, as Socrates said, with bringing down Heaven to the market-place.

Modern thought tends more and more to reject crude idealism and to support the monistic theory, the double aspect, the transfigured realism. It discusses the Nature of Things in Themselves. To the question, is there anything outside of us which corresponds with our sensations? that is to say, is the whole world simply "I," they reply that obviously there is a something else; and that this something else produces the brain-disturbance which is called sensation. Instinct orders us to do something; Reason (the balance of faculties) directs; and the strongest motive controls. Modern

---



---

## N O T E S   O N   T H E   K A S Î D A H

---

Science, by the discovery of Radiant Matter, a fourth condition, seems to conciliate the two schools. "La découverte d'un quatrième état de la matière," says a Reviewer, "c'est la porte ouverte à l'infini de ses transformations; c'est l'homme invisible et impalpable de même possible sans cesser d'être substantiel; c'est le monde des esprits entrant sans absurdité dans la domaine des hypothèses scientifiques; c'est la possibilité pour le matérialiste de croire à la vie d'outre tombe, sans renoncer au substratum matériel qu'il croit nécessaire au maintien de l'individualité."

With Hâjî Abdû the soul is not material, for that would be a contradiction of terms. He regards it, with many moderns, as a state of things, not a thing; a convenient word denoting the sense of personality, of individual identity. In its ghostly signification he discovers an artificial dogma which could hardly belong to the brutal savages of the Stone Age. He finds it in the funereal books of ancient Egypt, whence probably it passed to the Zendavesta and the Vedas. In the Hebrew Pentateuch, of which part is still attributed to Moses, it is unknown, or, rather, it is deliberately ignored by the author or authors. The early Christians could not agree upon the subject; Origen advocates the pre-existence of men's souls, supposing them to have been all created at one time and successively embodied. Others make Spirit born with the hour of birth: and so forth.

But the brain-action or, if you so phrase it, the mind, is not confined to the reasoning faculties; nor can we afford to ignore the sentiments, the affections which are, perhaps, the most potent realities of life. Their loud affirmative voice contrasts strongly with the titubant accents of the intellect. They seem to demand a future life, even a state of rewards and punishments from the Maker of the world, the *Ortolano Eterno*,<sup>1</sup> the Potter of the East, the Watchmaker of the West. They protest against the idea of annihilation. They revolt at the notion of eternal parting from parents, kinsmen and friends. Yet the dogma of a future life is by no means catholic and universal. The Anglo-European race apparently cannot exist without it, and we have lately heard of the "Aryan Soul-land." On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> The Eternal Gardener; so the old inscription saying:—

$$\text{Homo} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{locatus est in} \\ \text{damnatus est in} \\ \text{humatus est in} \\ \text{renatus est in} \end{array} \right\} \text{horto.}$$

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

many of the Buddhist and even the Brahman Schools preach Nirwâna (comparative non-existence) and Parinirwâna (absolute nothingness). Moreover, the great Turanian family, actually occupying all Eastern Asia, has ever ignored it; and the 200,000,000 of Chinese Confucians, the mass of the nation, protest emphatically against the mainstay of the western creeds, because it "unfits men for the business and duty of life, by fixing their speculations on an unknown world." And even its votaries, in all ages, races and faiths, cannot deny that the next world is a copy, more or less idealized, of the present; and that it lacks a single particular savouring of originality. It is in fact a mere continuation; and the continuation is "not proven."

It is most hard to be a man;

and the Pilgrim's sole consolation is in self-cultivation, and in the pleasures of the affections. This sympathy may be an indirect self-love, a reflection of the light of egotism: still it is so transferred as to imply a different system of convictions. It requires a different name: to call benevolence "self-love" is to make the fruit or flower not only depend upon a root for development (which is true), but the very root itself (which is false). And, finally, his ideal is of the highest: his praise is reserved for:

—Lives

Lived in obedience to the inner law  
Which cannot alter.

## NOTE II

A FEW words concerning the Kasîdah itself. Our Hâjî begins with a *mise-en-scène*; and takes leave of the Caravan setting out for Mecca. He sees the "Wolf's tail" (*Dum-i-gurg*), the λυκανγές, or wolf-gleam, the Diluculum, the Zodiacal dawn-light, the first faint brushes of white radiating from below the Eastern horizon. It is accompanied by the morning-breath (*Dam-i-Subh*), the current of air, almost imperceptible except by the increase of cold, which Moslem physiologists suppose to be the early prayer offered by Nature to the First Cause. The Ghoul-i-Biyâbân (Desert-Demon) is evidently the personification of man's fears and of the dangers that surround travelling in the wilds. The "wold-where-none-save-Hé (Allah)-can-dwell" is a great and terrible wilderness (*Dasht-i-lâ-siwâ Hu*); and Allah's Holy Hill is Arafât, near Mecca, which the Caravan reaches after passing through Medina. The first section ends with a sore lament that the "meetings of this world take place upon the highway of Separation"; and the original also has:—

The chill of sorrow numbs my thought: methinks I hear the passing knell;  
As dies across yon thin blue line the tinkling of the Camel-bell.

The next section quotes the various aspects under which Life appeared to the wise and foolish teachers of humanity. First comes Hafiz, whose well-known lines are quoted beginning with *Shab-i-târik o bîm-i-mauj*, &c. *Hûr* is the plural of *Ahwar*, in full *Ahwar el-Ayn*, a maid whose eyes are intensely white where they should be white, and black elsewhere: hence our silly "Houris." Follows *Umar-i-Khayyâm*, who spiritualized *Tasawwuf*, or *Sooffeism*, even as the *Soofis* (Gnostics) spiritualized Moslem Puritanism. The verses alluded to are:—

You know, my friends, with what a brave carouse  
I made a second marriage in my house,  
Divorced old barren Reason from my bed  
And took the Daughter of the Vine to spouse.

(St. 60, Mr. FitzGerald's translation.)

---



---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

Here "Wine" is used in its mystic sense of entranced Love for the Soul of Souls. Umar was hated and feared because he spoke boldly when his brethren the Soofis dealt in innuendoes. A third quotation has been trained into a likeness of the "Hymn of Life," despite the commonplace and the *navrante vulgarité* which characterize the pseudo-Schiller-Anglo-American School. The same has been done to the words of Isâ (Jesus); for the author, who is well-read in the Ingîl (Evangel), evidently intended the allusion. Mansur el-Hallâj (the Cotton-Cleaner) was stoned for crudely uttering the Pantheistic dogma *Ana 'l Hak* (I am the Truth, *i. e.*, God), *wa laysa fi-jubbatî il' Allah* (and within my coat is nought but God). His blood traced on the ground the first-quoted sentence. Lastly, there is a quotation from "Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes," &c.: here *παίζε* may mean sport; but the context determines the kind of sport intended. The Zâhid is the literal believer in the letter of the Law, opposed to the Soofî, who believes in its spirit: hence the former is called a Zâhiri (outsider), and the latter a Bâtini, an insider. Moses is quoted because he ignored future rewards and punishments. As regards the "two Eternities," Persian and Arab metaphysicians split Eternity, *i. e.*, the negation of Time, into two halves, *Azal* (beginninglessness) and *Abad* (endlessness); both being mere words, gatherings of letters with a subjective significance. In English we use "Eternal" (*Æviternus*, age-long, life-long) as loosely, by applying it to three distinct ideas; (1) the habitual, in popular parlance; (2) the exempt from duration; and (3) the everlasting, which embraces all duration. "Omniscience-Maker" is the old Roman sceptic's *Homo fecit Deos*.

The next section is one long wail over the contradictions, the mysteries, the dark end, the infinite sorrowfulness of all existence, and the arcanum of grief which, Luther said, underlies all life. As with Euripides "to live is to die, to die is to live." Hâjî Abdû borrows the Hindu idea of the human body. "It is a mansion," says Menu, "with bones for its beams and rafters; with nerves and tendons for cords; with muscles and blood for cement; with skin for its outer covering; filled with nō sweet perfume, but loaded with impurities; a mansion infested by age and sorrow; the seat of malady; harassed with pains; haunted with the quality of darkness (Tama-guna), and incapable of standing." The Pot and Potter began with the ancient Egyptians. "Sitting as a potter at the wheel, Cneph (at Philæ) moulds clay, and gives the spirit of life to the nostrils of Osiris." Hence the Genesitic "breath." Then we meet him in the Vedas, the Being "by whom the fictile

---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

vase is formed; the clay out of which it is fabricated." We find him next in Jeremiah's "Arise and go down unto the Potter's house," &c. (xviii. 2), and lastly in Romans (ix. 20), "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" No wonder that the first Hand who moulded the man-mud is a *lieu commun* in Eastern thought. The "waste of agony" is Buddhism, or Schopenhauerism pure and simple. I have moulded "Earth on Earth" upon "Seint Ysidre"'s well known rhymes (A. D. 1440):—

Erthe out of Erthe is wondirli wrouzt,  
Erthe of Erthe hath gete a dignite of nouzt,  
Erthe upon Erthe hath sett all his thouzt  
How that Erthe upon Erthe may be his brouzt, &c.

The "Camel-rider," suggests Ossian, "yet a few years and the blast of the desert comes." The dromedary was chosen as Death's vehicle by the Arabs, probably because it bears the Bedouin's corpse to the distant burial-ground, where he will lie among his kith and kin. The end of this section reminds us of:—

How poor, how rich; how abject, how august,  
How complicate, how wonderful is Man!

The Hâjî now passes to the results of his long and anxious thoughts: I have purposely twisted his exordium into an echo of Milton:—

Till old experience doth attain  
To something of prophetic strain.

He boldly declares that there is no God as man has created his Creator. Here he is at one with modern thought:—"En général les croyants font le Dieu comme ils sont eux-mêmes" (says J. J. Rousseau, "Confessions," I. 6): "les bons le font bon: les méchants le font méchant: les dévots haineux et bilieux, ne voient que l'enfer, parce qu'ils voudraient damner tout le monde; les âmes aimantes et douces n'y croient guère; et l'un des étonnements dont je ne reviens pas est de voir le bon Fénelon en parler dans son *Télémaque* comme s'il y croyoit tout de bon: mais j'espère qu'il mentoit alors; car enfin quelque véridique qu'on soit, il faut bien mentir quelquefois quand on est évêque." "Man depicts himself in his gods," says Schiller. Hence the *Naturgott*, the deity of all ancient peoples, and with which every system began, allowed and approved of actions distinctly immoral, often diabolical. Belief became moralized only when the conscience of the community, and with it of the individual items, began aspiring to its golden age,—Perfection. "Dieu est le superlatif, dont le positif

---

---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

est l'homme," says Carl Vogt; meaning, that the popular idea of a *numen* is that of a magnified and non-natural man.

He then quotes his authorities. Buddha, whom the Catholic Church converted to Saint Josaphat, refused to recognize Ishwara (the deity), on account of the mystery of the "cruelty of things." Schopenhauer, Miss Cobbe's model pessimist, who at the humblest distance represents Buddha in the world of Western thought, found the vision of man's unhappiness, irrespective of his actions, so overpowering that he concluded the Supreme Will to be malevolent, "heartless, cowardly, and arrogant." Confucius, the "Throneless king, more powerful than all kings," denied a personal deity. The Epicurean idea rules the China of the present day. "God is great, but He lives too far off," say the Turanian Saints in Aryan India; and this is the general language of man in the Turanian East.

Hâjî Abdû evidently holds that idolatry begins with a personal deity. And let us note that the latter is deliberately denied by the "Thirty-nine Articles." With them God is "a Being without Parts (personality) or Passions." He professes a vague Agnosticism, and attributes popular faith to the fact that *Timor fecit Deos*; "every religion being, without exception, the child of fear and ignorance" (Carl Vogt). He now speaks as the "Drawer of the Wine," the "Ancient Taverner," the "Old Magus," the "Patron of the Mughân or Magians"; all titles applied to the Soofi as opposed to the Zâhid. His "idols" are the *eidola* (illusions) of Bacon, "having their foundations in the very constitution of man," and therefore appropriately called *fabulae*. That "Nature's Common Course" is subject to various interpretation, may be easily proved. Aristotle was as great a subverter as Alexander; but the quasi-prophetical Stagyrite of the Dark Ages, who ruled the world till the end of the thirteenth century, became the "twice execrable" of Martin Luther; and was finally abolished by Galileo and Newton. Here I have excised two stanzas. The first is:—

Theories for truths, fable for fact; system for science vex the thought  
Life's one great lesson you despise—to know that all we know is nought.

This is in fact:—

Well didst thou say, Athena's noblest son,  
The most we know is nothing can be known.

The next is:—

Essence and substance, sequence, cause, beginning, ending, space and time,  
These be the toys of manhood's mind, at once ridiculous and sublime.

---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

He is not the only one who so regards "bothering Time and Space." A late definition of the "infinitely great," viz., that the idea arises from denying form to any figure; of the "infinitely small," from refusing magnitude to any figure, is a fair specimen of the "dismal science"—metaphysics.

Another omitted stanza reads:—

How canst thou, Phenomen! pretend the Noumenon to mete and span?  
Say which were easier probed and proved, Absolute Being or mortal man?

One would think that he had read Kant on the "Knowable and the Unknowable," or had heard of the Yankee lady who could "differentiate between the Finite and the Infinite." It is a commonplace of the age, in the West as well as the East, that Science is confined to phenomena, and cannot reach the Noumena, the things themselves. This is the scholastic realism, the "residuum of a bad metaphysic," which deforms the system of Comte. With all its pretensions, it simply means that there are, or can be conceived, things in themselves (*i.e.*, unrelated to thought); that we know them to exist; and, at the same time, that we cannot know what they are. But who dares say "cannot"? Who can measure man's work when he shall be as superior to our present selves as we are to the Cave-man of past time?

The "Chain of Universe" alludes to the Jain idea that the whole, consisting of intellectual as well as of natural principles, existed from all eternity; and that it has been subject to endless revolutions, whose causes are the inherent powers of nature, intellectual as well as physical, without the intervention of a deity. But the Poet ridicules the "non-human," *i.e.*, the not-ourselves, the negation of ourselves and consequently a non-existence. Most Easterns confuse the contradictories, in which one term stands for something, and the other for nothing (*e.g.*, ourselves and not-ourselves), with the contraries (*e.g.*, rich and not-rich=poor), in which both terms express a something. So the positive-negative "infinite" is not the complement of "finite," but its negation. The Western man derides the process by making "not-horse" the complementary entity of "horse." The Pilgrim ends with the favourite Soofī tenet that the five (six?) senses are the doors of all human knowledge, and that no form of man, incarnation of the deity, prophet, apostle or sage, has ever produced an idea not conceived within his brain by the sole operation of these vulgar material agents. Evidently he is neither spiritualist nor idealist.

He then proceeds to show that man depicts himself in his God, and that "God is the racial expression"; a pedagogue on the Nile, an abstraction

---

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

in India, and an astrologer in Chaldæa; where Abraham, says Berosus (Josephus, Ant. I. 7, § 2, and II. 9, § 2), was "skilful in the celestial science." He notices the Akârana-Zamân (endless Time) of the Guebres, and the working dual, Hormuzd and Ahriman. He brands the God of the Hebrews with pugnacity and cruelty. He has heard of the beautiful creations of Greek fancy which, not attributing a moral nature to the deity, included Theology in Physics; and which, like Professor Tyndall, seemed to consider all matter everywhere alive. We have adopted a very different Unitarianism; Theology with its one Creator; Pantheism with its "one Spirit's plastic stress"; and Science with its one Energy. He is hard upon Christianity and its "trinal God": I have not softened his expression (ل = a riddle), although it may offend readers. There is nothing more enigmatical to the Moslem mind than Christian Trinitarianism: all other objections they can get over, not this. Nor is he any lover of Islamism, which, like Christianity, has its ascetic Hebraism and its Hellenic hedonism; with the world of thought moving between these two extremes. The former, defined as predominant or exclusive care for the practice of right, is represented by Semitic and Arab influence, Korânic and Hadîsic. The latter, the religion of humanity, a passion for life and light, for culture and intelligence, for art, poetry and science, is represented in Islamism by the fondly and impiously cherished memory of the old Guebre kings and heroes, beauties, bards and sages. Hence the mention of Zâl and his son Rostam; of Cyrus and of the Jâm-i-Jamshîd, which may be translated either grail (cup) or mirror: it showed the whole world within its rim; and hence it was called Jâm-i-Jehân-numâ (universe-exposing). The contemptuous expressions about the diet of camel's milk and the meat of the Susmâr, or green lizard, are evidently quoted from Firdausi's famous lines beginning:—

Arab-râ be-jâi rasîd'est kâr.

The Hâjî is severe upon those who make of the Deity a Khwân-i-yagh-mâ (or tray of plunder), as the Persians phrase it. He looks upon the shepherds as men,

—Who rob the sheep themselves to clothe.

So Schopenhauer (Leben, &c. by Wilhelm Gewinner) furiously shows how the "English nation ought to treat that set of hypocrites, imposters and money-graspers, the clergy, that annually devours £3,500,000."

---



---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

The Hâjî broadly asserts that there is no Good and no Evil in the absolute sense as man has made them. Here he is one with Pope:—

And spite of pride, in erring nature's spite  
One truth is clear—whatever is, is right.

Unfortunately the converse is just as true:—whatever is, is wrong. Khizr is the Elijah who puzzled Milman. He represents the Soofi, the Bâtini, while Musâ (Moses) is the Zâhid, the Zâhiri; and the strange adventures of the twain, invented by the Jews, have been appropriated by the Moslems. He derides the Freewill of man; and, like Diderot, he detects "pantaloon in a prelate, a satyr in a president, a pig in a priest, an ostrich in a minister, and a goose in a chief clerk." He holds to Fortune, the Τύχη of Alcman, which is, *Εὐνομίας τε καὶ Πειθοῦς ἀδελφὰ, καὶ Προμαθείας θυγάτηρ*,—Chance, the sister of Order and Trust, and the daughter of Forethought. The Scandinavian Spinners of Fate were Urd (the Was, the Past), Verdandi (the Becoming, or Present), and Skuld (the To-be, or Future). He alludes to Plato, who made the Demiourgos create the worlds by the Logos (the Hebrew Dabar) or Creative Word, through the Æons. These Αἰῶνες of the Mystics were spiritual emanations from Αἰὼν, lit. a wave of influx, an age, period, or day; hence the Latin *ævum*, and the Welsh Awen, the stream of inspiration falling upon a bard. Basilides, the Egypto-Christian, made the Creator evolve seven Æons or Pteromata (fulnesses); from two of whom, Wisdom and Power, proceeded the 365 degrees of Angels. All were subject to a Prince of Heaven, called Abraxas, who was himself under guidance of the chief Æon, Wisdom. Others represent the first Cause to have produced an Æon or Pure Intelligence; the first a second, and so forth till the tenth. This was material enough to affect Hyle, which thereby assumed a spiritual form. Thus the two incompatibles combined in the Scheme of Creation.

He denies the three ages of the Buddhists: the wholly happy; the happy mixed with misery, and the miserable tinged with happiness,—the present. The Zoroastrians had four, each of 3,000 years. In the first, Hormuzd, the good-god, ruled alone; then Ahriman, the bad-god, began to work sub-serviently: in the third both ruled equally; and in the last, now current, Ahriman has gained the day.

Against the popular idea that man has caused the misery of this world, he cites the ages, when the Old Red Sandstone bred gigantic cannibal fishes; when the Oolites produced the mighty reptile tyrants of air, earth,

---

and sea; and when the monsters of the Eocene and Miocene periods shook the ground with their ponderous tread. And the world of waters is still a hideous scene of cruelty, carnage, and destruction.

He declares Conscience to be a geographical and chronological accident. Thus he answers the modern philosopher whose soul was overwhelmed by the marvel and the awe of two things, "the starry heaven above and the moral law within." He makes the latter sense a development of the gregarious and social instincts; and so travellers have observed that the moral is the last step in mental progress. His Moors are the savage Dankali and other negroid tribes, who offer a cup of milk with one hand and stab with the other. He translates literally the Indian word Hâthî (an elephant), the animal with the Hâth (hand, or trunk). Finally he alludes to the age of active volcanoes, the present, which is merely temporary, the shifting of the Pole, and the spectacle to be seen from Mushtari, or the planet Jupiter.

The Hâjî again asks the old, old question, What is Truth? And he answers himself, after the fashion of the wise Emperor of China, "Truth hath not an unchanging name." A modern English writer says: "I have long been convinced by the experience of my life, as a pioneer of various heterodoxies which are rapidly becoming orthodoxies, that nearly all truth is temperamental to us, or given in the affections and intuitions; and that discussion and inquiry do little more than feed temperament." Our poet seems to mean that the Perceptions, when they perceive truly, convey objective truth, which is universal; whereas the Reflectives and the Sentiments, the working of the moral region, or the middle lobe of the phrenologists, supplies only subjective truth, personal and individual. Thus to one man the axiom, *Opes irritamenta malorum*, represents a distinct fact; while another holds wealth to be an incentive for good. Evidently both are right, according to their lights.

Hâjî Abdû cites Plato and Aristotle, as usual with Eastern songsters, who delight in Mantik (logic). Here he appears to mean that a false proposition is as real a proposition as one that is true. "Faith moves mountains" and "Manet immota fides" are evidently quotations. He derides the teaching of the "First Council of the Vatican" (cap. v), "all the faithful are little children listening to the voice of St. Peter," who is the "Prince of the Apostles." He glances at the fancy of certain modern physicists, "devotion is a definite molecular change in the convolution of grey pulp."

---

---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

He notices with contumely the riddle of which Milton speaks so glibly, where the Dialogists

—reasoned high  
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute.

In opposition to the orthodox Mohammedan tenets which make Man's soul his percipient Ego, an entity, a unity, the Soofi considers it a fancy, opposed to body, which is a fact; at most a state of things, not a thing; a consensus of faculties whereof our frames are but the phenomena. This is not contrary to Genesitic legend. The Hebrew Ruach and Arabic Ruh, now perverted to mean soul or spirit, simply signify wind or breath, the outward and visible sign of life. Their later schools are even more explicit: "For that which befalls man befalls beasts; as the one dies, so does the other; they have all one death; all go unto one place" (Eccles. iii. 19). But the modern soul, a nothing, a string of negations, a negative in chief, is thus described in the Mahâbhârat: "It is indivisible, inconceivable, inconceptible: it is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable: it is invisible and unalterable." Hence the modern spiritualism which, rejecting materialism, can use only material language.

These, says the Hâjî, are mere sounds. He would not assert "*Verba gignunt verba*," but "*Verba gignunt res*," a step further. The idea is Bacon's "*idola fori, omnium molestissima*," the twofold illusions of language; either the names of things that have no existence in fact, or the names of things whose idea is confused and ill-defined.

He derives the Soul-idea from the "savage ghost" which Dr. Johnson defined to be a "kind of shadowy being." He justly remarks that it arose (perhaps) in Egypt; and was not invented by the "People of the Book." By this term Moslems denote Jews and Christians who have a recognized revelation, while their ignorance refuses it to Guebres, Hindus, and Confucians.

He evidently holds to the doctrine of progress. With him protoplasm is the Yliastron, the Prima Materies. Our word matter is derived from the Sanskrit मातर (mâtrâ), which, however, signifies properly the invisible type of visible matter; in modern language, the substance distinct from the sum of its physical and chemical properties. Thus, Mâtrâ exists only in thought, and is not recognizable by the action of the five senses. His "Chain of Being" reminds us of Prof. Huxley's Pedigree of the Horse,

---



---

## NOTES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

Orohippus, Mesohippus, Meiohippus, Protohippus, Pleiohippus, and Equus. He has evidently heard of modern biology, or Hylozoism, which holds its quarter-million species of living beings, animal and vegetable, to be progressive modifications of one great fundamental unity, an unity of so-called "mental faculties" as well as of bodily structure. And this is the jelly-speck. He scoffs at the popular idea that man is the great central figure round which all things gyrate like marionettes; in fact, the anthropocentric era of Draper, which, strange to say, lives by the side of the telescope and the microscope. As man is of recent origin, and may end at an early epoch of the macrocosm, so before his birth all things revolved round nothing, and may continue to do so after his death.

The Hâjî, who elsewhere denounces "compound ignorance," holds that all evil comes from error; and that all knowledge has been developed by overthrowing error, the ordinary channel of human thought. He ends this section with a great truth. There are things which human Reason or Instinct matured, in its undeveloped state, cannot master; but Reason is a Law to itself. Therefore we are not bound to believe, or to attempt belief in, any thing which is contrary or contradictory to Reason. Here he is diametrically opposed to Rome, who says, "Do not appeal to History; that is private judgment. Do not appeal to Holy Writ; that is heresy. Do not appeal to Reason; that is Rationalism."

He holds with the Patriarchs of Hebrew Holy Writ, that the present life is all-sufficient for an intellectual (not a sentimental) being; and, therefore, that there is no want of a Heaven or a Hell. With far more contradiction the Western poet sings:—

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed  
In one self-place; but when we are in hell,  
And where hell is there must we ever be,  
And, to be short, when all this world dissolves,  
And every creature shall be purified,  
All places shall be hell which are not heaven.

For what want is there of a Hell when all are pure? He enlarges upon the ancient Buddhist theory, that Happiness and Misery are equally distributed among men and beasts; some enjoy much and suffer much; others the reverse. Hence Diderot declares, "Sober passions produce only the commonplace . . . the man of moderate passion lives and dies like a brute." And again we have the half-truth:—

---

---

## TES ON THE KASĪDAH

---

That the mark of rank in nature  
Is capacity for pain.

The latter implies an equal capacity for pleasure, and thus the balance is kept.

Hâjī Abdû then proceeds to show that Faith is an accident of birth. One of his omitted distichs says:—

Race makes religion; true! but aye upon the Maker acts the made,  
A finite God, an infinite sin, in lieu of raising man, degrade.

In a manner of dialogue he introduces the various races each fighting to establish its own belief. The Frank (Christian) abuses the Hindu, who retorts that he is of Mlenchha, mixed or impure, blood, a term applied to all non-Hindus. The same is done by Nazarene and Mohammedan; by the Confucian, who believes in nothing, and by the Soofi, who naturally has the last word. The association of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph with the Trinity, in the Roman and Greek Churches, makes many Moslems conclude that Christians believe not in three but in five Persons. So an Englishman writes of the early Fathers, "They not only said that  $3=1$ , and that  $1=3$ : they professed to explain how that curious arithmetical combination had been brought about. The Indivisible had been divided, and yet was not divided: it was divisible, and yet it was indivisible; black was white, and white was black; and yet there were not two colours but one colour; and whoever did not believe it would be damned." The Arab quotation runs in the original:—

*Absanu 'l- Makâni l' il- Fatâ 'l- Jehannamu—*

The best of places for (the generous) youth is Gehenna:

Gehenna, alias Jahim, being the fiery place of eternal punishment. And the second saying, *Al- nâr wa lâ 'l-' Ar*—"Fire (of Hell) rather than Shame,"—is equally condemned by the Koranist. The Gustâkhi (insolence) of Fate is the expression of Umar-i-Khayyâm (St. xxx):—

What, without asking hither hurried *whence?*

And, without asking *whither* hurried hence!

Oh, many a cup of this forbidden wine

Must drown the memory of that insolence.

Soofistically, the word means "the coquetry of the beloved one," the divinæ particula auræ. And the section ends with Pope's:—

He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

---

## CONCLUSION

HERE the Hâjî ends his practical study of mankind. The image of Destiny playing with men as pieces is a view common amongst Easterns. His idea of wisdom is once more Pope's:—

And all our knowledge is ourselves to know.  
(Essay IV. 398.)

Regret, *i.e.*, repentance, was one of the forty-two deadly sins of the ancient Egyptians. "Thou shalt not consume thy heart," says the Ritual of the Dead, the negative justification of the soul or ghost (Lepsius, "Aelteste Texte des Todtenbuchs"). We have borrowed competitive examination from the Chinese; and, in these morbid days of weak introspection and retrospection, we might learn wisdom from the sturdy old Khemites. When he sings "Abjure the Why and seek the How," he refers to the old Scholastic difference of the *Demonstratio propter quid* (why is a thing?), as opposed to *Demonstratio quia* (*i.e.*, that a thing is). The "great Man" shall end with becoming deathless, as Shakespeare says in his noble sonnet:—

And Death once dead, there's no more dying then!

Like the great Pagans, the Hâjî holds that man was born good, while the Christian, "tormented by the things divine," cleaves to the comforting doctrine of innate sinfulness. Hence the universal tenet, that man should do good in order to gain by it here or hereafter; the "enlightened selfishness" that says, Act well and get compound interest in a future state. The allusion to the "Theist-word" apparently means that the votaries of a personal Deity must believe in the absolute foreknowledge of the Omniscient in particulars as in generals. The Rule of Law emancipates man; and its exceptions are the gaps left by his ignorance. The wail over the fallen flower, &c., reminds us of the Pulambal (Lamentations) of the Anti-Brahminical writer, "Pathira-Giriyâr." The allusion to Mâyâ is from Dâs Kabîr:—

---

## NOTES ON THE KASÎDAH

---

*Mâyâ mare, na man mare, mar mar gayâ sarîr.*

Illusion dies, the mind dies not though dead and gone the flesh.

Nirwânâ, I have said, is partial extinction by being merged in the Supreme, not to be confounded with *Pari-nirwânâ* or absolute annihilation. In the former also, dying gives birth to a new being, the embodiment of *karma* (deeds), good and evil, done in the countless ages of transmigration.

Here ends my share of the work. On the whole it has been considerable. I have omitted, as has been seen, sundry stanzas, and I have changed the order of others. The text has nowhere been translated verbatim; in fact, a familiar European turn has been given to many sentiments which were judged too Oriental. As the metre adopted by Hâjî Abdû was the *Bahr Tawîl* (long verse), I thought it advisable to preserve that peculiarity, and to fringe it with the rough, unobtrusive rhyme of the original.

Vive valeque!

























